

THE CREEPING THING

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The Well Known Serial
Writer.

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hiding place and the house, was a smaller gray white bulk that I knew was one of the small cut-houses flanking the near side of the more modern garages that faced the side street entrance to the front of the grounds.

With a sudden quick sally, still bearing my justifying packing case, I made for the shelter of its projecting eaves. Luck was with me. Leaning against the base of the building, its length projecting far beyond it at the back, was a workman's ladder.

The rain, that now I hailed as a friend, was still falling in the misty torrent that challenged any but the bravest to essay passage through.

I set my small packing case down, loosened my automatic from its fitted pocket under my arm and felt for the one in my pocket. It was safe and easily to be come at. Then I stopped and lifted the long ladder to my shoulders.

The wet sward gave under my weight at each step and the wetness oozed into the low cut shoes that encased my feet. Before I reached the lee of the house, the water had begun to squish uncomfortably inside of my shoes. But discomfort was the least of the things I was concerned about.

I set my ladder down underneath the window where the swaying shutter still allowed that sharply penetrating beam of yellow light to stab the rain swept darkness. Gently and noiselessly I eased it against the side of the house. Its topmost rung came almost to the sill of the window in the room whose interior I was anxious to see.

With the ladder in place, I waited a moment in the streaming rain to be sure that the light impact of the upright supports against the walls of the house had not disturbed anyone within to the point of investigation. There was no movement or sound to indicate that anything was amiss.

Cautiously, and with my soaking feet making little squashy sounds as I set them down one after the other on the rounds of the ladder, I climbed up toward the half open shutter. Just before I came to the level, I paused and shook the water from the brim of my hat and shrugged as much of the superfluous water from my shoulders as my precarious position would allow.

Then, very carefully and very cautiously, I drew myself up, being careful to keep within the lee of the half closed shutter. Here again luck or fate, or whatever one wished to call it, seemed to favor me. For, in the swinging leaf of the open shutter

was a small irregular crevice where some banging wind had probably enlarged a flawed crack in the wood. Through this crack the greater part of the room that lay toward the back of the house and opposite the door was revealed to my inquisitive eyes.

As I glued my eye to this opening, the sight that met my view almost startled me into an exclamation of surprised horror.

Seated in a chair, his back toward me, was a man. Although unbound, the figure sat rigid, as though held in position by ropes—hands at the sides in just such an unnaturally stiff posture as one sees in bound figures. But the horror of that still figure lay, not in the posture or the stillness, but in the view of the top of the head which faced me. The tonsured head was a red mass of clotted blood from which dangled the still undetached crown of black hair that had covered it. But for this figure, the room was totally empty.

For a single hasty instant, I stood spellbound on my high perch. The sight before me nauseated me. In the sudden weakness of physical resistance, I almost lost my balance. But at sight of the door opposite, I quickly regained control over myself. Grim curiosity held me tense and motionless.

The knob of the door was turning slowly. The door itself began to swing inward. Then—just as the widening crack was darkened by a body, the sudden rattle and shrill honking of a motor car broke into a very din of almost ludicrous sound that shattered the stillness familiarly. I knew that sound and cursed it. It was Alec in the soul-destroying and silence-defying Ford that I had hoped would be successful and that now it seemed would be my Nemesis.

With that shrilling and cackling, the door toward which I was gazing with anxious eyes, suddenly jerked itself shut. I could hear running footsteps within and then sudden cessation of any sound but that infernal honking from without.

Suddenly I decided that I must not be found up there peering into that room from without. I must see it legitimately and from within.

With more speed than I had summoned from boyhood, I clambered and fell down the ladder to the thoroughly wet greensward, and, without stopping to retrieve the tell-tale means of ascent, I scampered to the cache where I had planted my defensive packing case. It was there wet, safe and unharmed. I grabbed it up and scampered around the side of the house to the front, from which point the din was still proceeding

from the horn, though the clatter of the running gear had ceased. Lights flashed on inside the house as I gained the side of the little old Ford where it loomed at the front gate through the driving rain.

With a sibilant "shushing," meant to deter the peace- and quiet-destroying driver from further assault on the stormy atmosphere, I leaped onto the running board. I intended to quiet Alec by assuring him of my presence and then to establish a perfect alibi by being seen emerging from the Ford by any who might come out to investigate the infernal noise and quiet the racket.

But as I stuck my head inside of the car, the noise suddenly stopped, and—I looked with startled eyes at the driver's seat. It was empty, as was the rest of the car, as my starting, startled eyes soon told me. Yet the noise had been going on when I first stuck my head inside. No driver—no human driver—could have disappeared so suddenly.

I felt my blood go cold as I stepped back to the ground. Then, from the house toward which I faced, a sudden blood-curdling shriek shattered the night. I turned and started forward in a very frenzy of terror. The front door of Beal House was

How To Get Thin

ARE you too heavy? If so, be very careful whose advice you take when you try to regain that slender figure of yours. One can starve herself into a physical wreck that looks much worse than an overplump body—and this can be done far too easily.

Unless a skilled physician has placed you upon a certain diet, I would not advise you to refrain from eating anything that you now eat. Merely reduce the amount of bread, potatoes, butter, meat, fish and eggs you are eating, and appease your appetite by eating liberally of fresh fruits and vegetables that are known as "green vegetables." Oranges, lemons, apples, grapes, peaches, pineapples, cherries, berries, celery, lettuce, butter beans, peas, raw cabbage, watermelon, cauliflower and all such

thrown violently open and a figure staggered out into the night.
(Continued next week.)

(Who is the figure that staggered from the door of the Beal House? It may be the Creeping Thing. Better read the next installment!)

foods may be eaten in liberal quantities without adding an enormous number of calories to your diet. Try this method and see if you cannot lose a few ounces each week—and if you do this consistently, it will not be long before you'll have to order a thirty-six instead of a forty-four.

KIDDIES' DELIGHT

- 1/2 pound shredded coconut
- 1 cup raisins
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon soda

Cream the sugar and shortening together. Add the well-beaten eggs and beat until light; stir in the milk. Mix the flour, baking powder, soda and a pinch of salt and stir in the other ingredients. Stir in the rolled oats, chopped raisins and the chopped coconut. Drop by teaspoons on buttered pans and bake until a delicate brown in a quick oven—diminishing the heat after the cookies are set.

GREATER THAN BLACK PATTI

FLORENCE Cole-Talbert, shown here, is heralded by critics as the greatest operatic soprano the race has produced. She was the first Negro to win the diamond medal at the Chicago Musical College, in 1918. In Italy she sang the title role in the opera Aida. That was the first time in the history of Italian opera that a Negro sang the title role in any production. While in Europe, she studied under such masters as Crisada and Quezada of Rome, Bellini of Naples, Puccini of Milan and Picharan of Paris. The Italian public was so hearty in its approval of her that she was asked to join an exclusive group of lyric artists and because they loved her so she was rechristened Mora Bela Donna, beautiful brown lady. Her greatest conquest in America came when she was selected as soloist for the Los Angeles Philharmonic concert. This concert was broadcast over the entire country and the tremendous ovation she received was unprecedented. Mme. Talbert recently said:

"Since I was a child I have dreamed of being a great opera singer. The fact that I have once sung the lead in Aida only strengthens my belief that some day, somehow, I shall have my chance at home in an operatic role. I have worked hard to fit myself for any demand the public may make upon my voice, be it opera or concert.

"Realizing the early and continuous struggle every artist is confronted with, I have resolved to let nothing discourage me."

Mme. Talbert has been a pupil of Gloria Mayne, Oscar Saenger, Herman Deireis and Della Valeria. It was under the tutelage of Mme. Valeria that Mme. Talbert toured Europe, adding new laurels and prestige.



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